

**Groups back May 13 book**  
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**Ooi Kelly and G Vikneswary**

Several civil society groups have urged the government not to ban a new book on the May 13 racial riots but to engage the content of the book in an open and calm manner.

At a press conference organised by Komuniti Seni Jalan Telawi (KJST) yesterday, spokesperson Hasmi Hashim said though the incident was deemed sensitive, continued efforts to re-examine facts based on latest researches to obtain new interpretations of the tragic event must be encouraged.

He was referring to a new book by Dr Kua Kia Soong, 'May 13: Declassified Documents on the Malaysian Riots of 1969', which has garnered negative reactions from three senators in the Dewan Negara earlier this week.

Based on recently declassified documents at the Public Records Office in London, Kua in his book concluded that the 1969 riots which claimed hundreds of lives were not random acts of communal violence by a coup attempt against then premier Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Youth-group Youth4Change convener Lee Khai Loon said the book was important to the interest of national building as it provides Malaysians an alternative perspective to the incident

"The government should establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to allow facts regarding the May 13 incident to be made public," said Lee.

Similarly, Civil Rights Committee of the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall representative Liao Kok Fah said such a commission must be held soon as there are many witnesses to the event who are still alive today.

Liao said the Malaysian government should also take heed from the Public Records Office and declassify similar documents as well.

**Book seizure slammed**

Mstar Online senior reporter Fathi Aris Omar said uncovering the truth behind the 1969 riots was vital as many government policies today can be traced back to the event, such as the New Economic Policy and the New Cultural Policy.



"May 13 has to be discussed openly and analysed so that it won't be a kind of political boogie to discriminate especially the non-Malays and non-Muslims," he said.

Hasmi also criticised the authorities for seizing copies of the book.

"Even though, we at the KSJT have yet to agree with the contents of the book, we oppose the act of confiscating the book in an improper manner without requesting the book from the author or having discussions with him," he said.

He was referring to the confiscation of 10 copies of the book by Internal Security Ministry officials on Tuesday at a major bookstore in Kuala Lumpur.

The confiscation came soon after the three senators called for action to be taken against the book and author.

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